

THE TEA TRADE OF CHINA

Probable Effect of the War Upon a Declining Business.

HOW AND WHERE THE TEA IS RAISED

Picked by Girls and Soaked with Human Sweat—Costly Varieties and the Adulterated—Growth of the Opium Evil.

(Copyrighted, 1895, by Frank G. Carpenter.)

Will the war in China affect the tea trade? This is a matter which is agitating the merchants, and which will soon be of interest to tea drinkers all over the United States. The tea buds have already sprouted, and by the first of May the new crops will begin to come into the markets. East streams are now on their way from Europe and Russia to China. They go by the Mediterranean and Suez canal, and they stop at Ceylon and Singapore. They then go on to Shanghai and up the Yangtze-Kiang 700 miles into the interior of China. They stop at the city of Hankow, which is the greatest tea market in the world. Here they load as quickly as possible and steam back home as fast as they can. These tea ships run a race every year, and the steamer which gets in first receives the highest price for its tea. The first of the crop is considered the best, and should the Yangtze river be closed by war in May it will result in a great loss to the tea merchants. The prices of Japanese tea will certainly be increased, and its export will probably be greater than ever. The Japanese tea is by no means so good as that of China. It is nerve-exciting, and if it stands it becomes bitter. The majority of people of this country do not know what good tea is. They like green tea, and they mix the green and black together in a most disgusting way. They think they are buying a high price when they give \$1 for a pound of tea, and it will be surprising to many of them to know that there is tea in the world worth \$25 a pound, and I have heard of tea which costs more than \$100 a pound.

PRESIDENT HARRISON'S \$150 TEA.

Perhaps the most costly tea ever brought to this country was an Indian tea which was presented to Benjamin Harrison while he was president of the United States. It came from a great tea company in Ceylon, and it was presented in a box which had an elephant's foot, which had been hollowed out into a beautiful box. This contained several pounds of tea of a very choice variety, and it was presented to President Harrison by a man who had been in the service of the British government in India. The tea was a drink for the gods. President Harrison showed the tea to his friends, and now and then had a drawing made for those who were interested in it.

One day a western senator, who knew as much about tea as a cow does about chocolate caramels, spent an evening at the white house. During his stay President Harrison spoke of this wonderful tea and said he would give him a bit of it, supposing, of course, the man would understand that he would be giving him a bit of tea. The senator took the tea, and when he returned he said: "I am much obliged, indeed, Mr. President, and I will take it home to the madam." He thereupon put the box in his pocket. One of the president's officials, who was present at the time, told me of the incident, and I asked him as to what the president had done. "What could he do?" was the reply. "He couldn't ask the man to give it back without offending him and the result was that he carried away the box, which was worth more than its weight in gold, and which, I venture, was no more appreciated by the people who got it than the poorest of the Japanese variety."

WHAT GOOD TEA IS.

The Chinese tea which we get for \$1 a pound brings about 25 cents a pound in China, and what the Chinese call good tea is worth at least \$1 a pound wholesale in China, and it would bring in the United States \$2 a pound. Tea which costs \$10 a pound is by no means uncommon among rich Chinese, and there are some Chinese nabobs who serve up \$50 tea to their guests. The man who knows a good deal, wants the liquor to be dark colored and considers this a sign of strength. The best Chinese tea is often as clear as water, and the color of good tea should be a very light yellow, hardly as dark as light amber. The first leaves of the tea plant are the finest and the most money. We use every year about \$1,000,000 worth of Chinese tea, and we are fast becoming big consumers of Indian tea. The tea is raised through the tea district of the Himalaya mountains, and have tasted the tea which grows on the border of Tibet. This is said to be the natural home of the tea plant, and it is claimed that the tea was taken from here to China and there grown. The English now have vast tea plantations in India and these are increasing every year. The Chinese do not think that milk or sugar should be used with tea. Boiling water should be poured over tea, but the tea should be brewed in a cup. I made a cup of tea during a visit I made to Howqua, the famous millionaire of Canton. This man is said to be worth \$50,000,000, and the tea which he served me brought in was about the color of Georgia pine.

CHINESE TEA DISTRICTS.

The Yangtze-Kiang is the river which runs right through the center of the Chinese empire, cutting the land into two halves. It was told that the best teas were raised south of this river, and that no good tea could be grown above it. The great central tea market is, as I have said, at Hankow. Here there are vast tea factories and tea warehouses, and the very air is filled with tea. I visited many of the factories during my visit, and the method of preparing the tea for market are by no means of an appetizing nature. Just outside one of the largest establishments I saw a man carrying a basket full of the same certain unmentionable animals, which he cracked between his fingers and ate. A moment later I heard him talking to his assistant, who was picking out the tea, and he said: "I have a box of tea which was about to be shipped to England, and trading the leaves within it is a matter of great importance to ship them. A dozen other coolies, also in their bare feet, were engaged in the same work. The weather was warm, and the perspiration was rolling down their yellow skin, and was, I judge, readily absorbed by the tea in the boxes. In another part of the establishment I saw a lot of Chinese girls, who had feet bigger than their feet, picking over tea. Their feet, which were banded, were half-covered with the leaves of the second-grade tea, which they had thrown down into the baskets below them, as they were rapidly handling the leaves, sorting over each and every one of the thousands of tiny bits of green before them. At Hankow I was told that a vast amount of tea was spoiled about a year or so ago. It was so ruined by dampness or something that the Chinese are generally very careful to spread it out on the dirty wharves, where it was mixed with all kinds of foul stuff, and dried for shipment to America and England. The tea is generally raised on the tea grounds of some Chinese restaurants, which are taken out and redried, and in some cases shipped to America. I doubt this very much, but it is true that the Chinese tea is mostly raised over and over again, selling them to the poorer classes. The preparation of the tea for the market is almost altogether by the hands of the Chinese. They have it packed in baskets, which they carry on poles across their shoulders up and down the mountain passes. They get about 25 cents a day, and it costs about 2 cents a pound to pick the tea, and there are a number of local taxes, which will not probably be greatly increased on account of the war.

HOW BRICK TEA IS MADE.

Great quantities of tea are exported to Russia and Mongolia every year in shape of bricks. These are made of the lower grades of tea, and of tea which is generally raised and steamed and cooked until they are soft and mushy. They are then put into

blocks about the size of an ordinary brick and are pressed in the shape of those which become as hard as chocolate cakes. The finer varieties are molded into small cakes, in fact, of just about the size of the small cakes of sweet chocolate which you buy in candy stores. I visited several of the factories in Hankow which make this kind of tea, and the process was even less appetizing than that which I described as to the ordinary tea. The factories, in the first place, are very warm. The steaming tea is handled by dirty coolies, and the tea is packed in baskets, which are carried by boats up the rivers and canals to Tientsin, and from thence go on camels into Mongolia and on to Russia. There are about sixty bricks in one package, and they are so arranged that they can be carried on camels. This brick tea takes the place of money in many parts of Asia, and in Mongolia it passes as currency, each brick being worth from 15 to 20 cents. The Mongols divide a brick into thirty equal parts. They boil it with milk, butter, sheep fat and salt, using camel dung for fuel. I visited one of the largest of the brick tea factories in Hankow, and I met Russians there who were making fortunes out of shipping brick tea to Russia. Some of the factories employ more than a thousand hands, and the business is almost as great as that of shipping tea to Europe.

DECLINE OF THE TEA TRADE.

The Chinese tea trade has been declining for years, and this war will be a terrible blow to it. India is fast pushing its way to the tea markets of the world, and you find good Indian tea now sold all over the United States. The trade has practically grown up within the past twenty-five years, and since 1870 the Chinese markets have been steadily declining. In 1870 England imported ten million pounds of tea from Assam. Ten years later it was taking more than sixty million pounds and there are now more than a quarter of a million acres of tea plantations in India. The Chinese have been adulterating their tea, and they have been steadily losing ground, while the Japanese and the Indians have been steadily gaining. The Indian tea now brings a higher price in the English markets than the Chinese tea, and not half as much of the Chinese tea is sold in India. I had a chance to see something of the tea plantations of India during a journey which I made six years ago to Darjiling, and I found that there is a great deal of tea for a long distance through the well-kept tea gardens, the bushes of which are very thick and close together. The tea bushes in the gardens turn out more than three hundred pounds of tea per acre, and there are five pickings, beginning in March and ending in November. The tea is ready to be transported from the seed. The tea seeds are of about the size of a hazel nut. They are sown in nurseries in December and January, and by April the sprouts are ready to be transplanted. The best soil is virgin forest land, and the richer the better. The plants begin to bear in their third year, and they reach their best yield in their ninth year, after which the bush begins to decline. The Indian tea is generally grown in large plantations. The Chinese tea comes from the hills and mountains of the country, and the holdings are generally small. In China the tea plant is in full leaf during the latter part of May, at which time it will yield from ten to twenty ounces of leaf, and the best pickers average about fifteen pounds a day. The wages for such persons is from 10 to 15 cents a day, and the children and women are sent to the work. The most of the Japanese tea is now dried in copper or iron pans, which are set into bake ovens and kept hot. The Chinese tea is dried over charcoal in a sieve, being rubbed with the hand until the contents are perfectly dry and the leaves are broken up.

GREEN TEA AND BLACK TEA.

It is supposed by many in this country that green tea is caused by the copper basins in which it is dried. This is not so. There is a natural green tea, that is, a green tea produced without the use of coloring matter. Any kind of tea may be made green, according to the method of drying. If the tea is picked when it is not yet ripe, and dried quickly it will have a green color. This green, however, is often produced by putting indigo and soapstone into the drying pans, and I met a tea merchant in Japan who told me that most of the green tea was colored in this way, and not with copper basins. The natural color of the leaf is green, and the purest of tea, which is known as the sun-dried tea, is of a green color.

THE CHINESE AND OPIUM.

I am told that the falling off of the tea crop of China has made up by the increase in the opium product. Opium is grown now all over China, and there are plantations of it in the north beyond the Chinese wall. It was reported with the sickening smell of opium wherever I went, and in the city of Poochow, which is about as big as St. Louis, there are registered opium joints, and the biggest opium den in the world is to be found there. It is an immense building, and it is said to be worth about one-half of an American city block, and it is furnished as gorgeous as were the caves of Monte Cristo. The entrance to the opium den is a narrow passage, and the frames of the couches are inlaid with mother-of-pearl. There are hundreds of rooms, and when I visited this den the air was thick with opium smoke. I saw some of the beds men and women laid together and smoking side by side. There were saggard old men and fresh young boys smoking together, and the night was in bars or under wayside hedges. He had several narrow escapes, and it is a marvel that he was not arrested. His father, who is now a man of striking personal appearance.

THE ORGAN-GRINDER'S DANGEROUS COMMISSION.

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SCHURZ'S RESCUE OF KINKLE

Takes a Fellow Revolutionist Out of Prison Before the Eyes of the Guards.

PRUSSIA PUT A PRICE ON HIS HEAD

"Edmund Kinkle" Recites the Thrilling Story of Carl Schurz's Bold Act—An Incident of the German Revolution of 1848.

The United States has received many valuable citizens from Germany, but few have come here from that country in recent years who have brought with them an already acquired European reputation. Franz Sigel, who landed in New York in May, 1852, was known throughout Europe in consequence of his distinguished services in the German revolutionary war in 1848 and 1849, and Carl Schurz, who came here in 1852, had won a wide celebrity by his rescue of Gottfried Kinkel from a Prussian dungeon. But add to these two I can at the moment call to mind no others who have, since 1850, come to this country heralded by a European fame. The single act by which Carl Schurz became celebrated throughout Europe is not much known, and if it were, it would be heretofore a chapter in the history of the world of repetition for the benefit of the generation that has been born since it made Carl Schurz famous.

KINKLE AND THE GERMAN REVOLT.

Gottfried Kinkel was an illustrious poet, philosopher and patriot, who occupied high rank in the literature of Germany, and held the position of professor of rhetoric in the famous University of Bonn, in Rhinish Prussia. When the revolution of 1818 broke out his strong democratic sympathies led him to take an active part in the struggle against despotism. He set on foot a liberal newspaper, and in the spring of 1819 he signed an inscription of the students at Bonn, which falling, he fled to the Palatinate, where he entered the revolutionary army, and took part in the defense of Rastadt, a strong town and fortress in Baden. At the fall of that fortress he was among the prisoners, and, being speedily tried for high treason, he was condemned to a long imprisonment at hard labor.

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from the vehicle. He was soon clasped with the commandant, and the boy, who had given a letter bearing the official seal of the minister of the interior at Berlin. The commandant received the letter with all due respect, and read it with interest. "A deep-laid plot has been organized at Berlin, the object of which is to effect the forcible release of the convict Kinkel from the hands of our authorities. We are watching the movements of the conspirators and are preparing to arrest them. In order, however, to prevent the possibility of a surprise, the bearer of the present letter, Colonel —, is commanded to take charge of your prisoner, whom he will immediately conduct to the citadel at Magdeburg, and there place him in the hands of the governor of that fortress."

KINKLE RELEASED AND A BOLD RIDE.

The commandant, heavily armed, and placed in the post-chaise, which set off at once at a rapid pace, guarded by the colonel and the king's men, and by Prussian soldiers, on the road to Magdeburg. They rode all night at high speed, taking relays of horses, the uniform of the colonel and the magical words, "The king's service," being sufficient to secure the highest expedition. They rode all night, but the morning came at last—a gray winter's morning—and they stopped at a colonial inn, which opened the carriage door and bade the prisoner alight as the journey was ended. Kinkel obeyed, and found himself not at Magdeburg, but on the sea shore, near Carl Schurz, a few feet from where he stood, and, in the office, a ship with the British flag flying. "Don't you mind me, dear master," cried the countercell, "I am Carl Schurz. Come, let us embrace once on German soil, and then away heretofore a chapter in the history of the world of repetition for the benefit of the generation that has been born since it made Carl Schurz famous. KINKLE AND THE GERMAN REVOLT. Gottfried Kinkel was an illustrious poet, philosopher and patriot, who occupied high rank in the literature of Germany, and held the position of professor of rhetoric in the famous University of Bonn, in Rhinish Prussia. When the revolution of 1818 broke out his strong democratic sympathies led him to take an active part in the struggle against despotism. He set on foot a liberal newspaper, and in the spring of 1819 he signed an inscription of the students at Bonn, which falling, he fled to the Palatinate, where he entered the revolutionary army, and took part in the defense of Rastadt, a strong town and fortress in Baden. At the fall of that fortress he was among the prisoners, and, being speedily tried for high treason, he was condemned to a long imprisonment at hard labor.

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first floating thing that came near him. This proved to be a piece of saw timber, a beam from some building destroyed by the raging stream, and of sufficient size to bear up his weight. What afflicted him most after his drift, that he was not arrested, and he clung to himself to consider the whole bearing of his misfortune, was the fact that night, when he was in the woods, and he was in the funeral walls of forest, already began to cast gloom over his head. His father's plantation house was two miles away, and besides no voice could be heard very far above the tumult of the waves and the roar of the strong wind in the woods. Those were days when there was danger of no light sort in going alone and unarmed through the wild forest. Even if Thomas Ladd succeeded in reaching the shore, was a bear or a panther might meet him there. He had drifted far below the plantation landing, and his trusty gun had gone down when his canoe turned over. Still he clung to the beam, and now and again yelled right lustily for help, as he went up and down with the rapid rise and fall of the waves. Night fell with a fine fog-like rain that added to the darkness, and the boy's voice became more and more plaintive, and he became more and more despondent. He was a young man of about 18, and he was a native of Prussia, and he was a member of the strongest in Prussia, only eight miles from Berlin, and the key to the defenses of the capital. It was a very small town, and Schurz had played at organ grinding in the streets of Berlin, and he was a member of the strongest in Prussia, only eight miles from Berlin, and the key to the defenses of the capital.

THE ORGAN-GRINDER'S DANGEROUS COMMISSION.

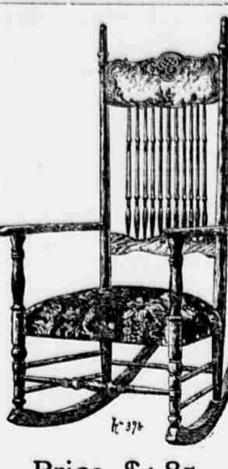
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BOSTON STORE

Furniture and Carpet Dept.

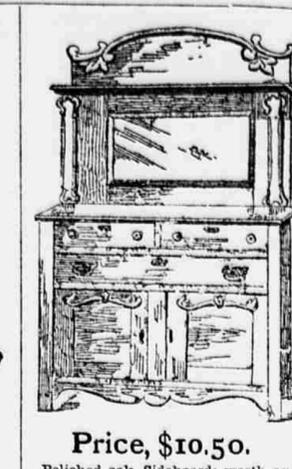
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This week will be a memorable one with us in our Furniture Department, Special bargains and low prices—unheard of by Omaha bayers—A solid carload of Rockers—A solid carload of Sideboards—A solid carload of Baby Carriages—A solid carload of Mattings—All bought at the prevailing low prices.



Price, \$4.85.

Upholstered with silk plush or tapestry—frame polished oak or mahogany—is worth anywhere \$8.00.



Price, \$10.50.

Polished oak Sideboard; worth anywhere \$20.00.



Price \$12.00.

Polished oak, finely upholstered, silk parasol, inside, actually worth \$20.00.

CARPETS. Yesterday we offered in our Carpet salesrooms 2,000 yards best makes pure all-wool extra superfine ingrain carpeting at 46c per yard. These are not all sold. Tomorrow Morning we shall place on our floors our entire line of best quality Body Brussels Carpets at 89c per yard with border. This price for this week only.

BOSTON STORE

3d Floor 15th and Douglas Sts.

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